

Newground Safety Tool Box Talks



HEAT STRESS

Every year we hear reports of people who become ill or die as a result of summer heat. Heat is an environmental hazard that can cause specific illnesses, decrease productivity, and increase accidents. Tolerance for heat varies greatly among people, although no one is entirely immune to heat stress problems. The heat illnesses are heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. Dehydration is the culprit because vast quantities of sweat must be produced to cool the body.

What are the signs of heat illnesses?

- **Heat Cramps:** Brief, periodic cramps in the muscles of the arms, legs or abdomen.
- **Heat Exhaustion:** Tiredness, weakness, thirst and dizziness, with occasional headache, nausea, diarrhea and fainting; skin is moist
- **Heat Stroke:** Confusion, delirium, loss of consciousness, convulsions, coma, and dry skin.

What can construction workers, particularly those who must work outdoors, do to prevent heat illnesses?

- **Drink plenty of fluids frequently, especially water. A glass every half hour when temperatures are high is more effective in the prevention of dehydration than larger amounts taken less frequently.**
- **Wear light weight clothing, and include a shirt which serves as a shield from the sun's rays.**
- **Get adequate sleep**
- **Avoid alcohol or stimulants when performing heavy physical activity in hot environments.**
- **If symptoms of heat exhaustion develop, the worker should report the situation to their supervisor immediately and go to a cooler area of the work site.**
- **First aid and/or physician care may be necessary**

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- **Heat stroke is an immediate threat to life. Cooling with cold water or even ice must begin at once. At the same time, medical aid should be called.**

The addition of salt to drinking fluids or in tablet form is unnecessary, and in some people may be harmful. Additional salt can be used with foods, according to taste.

Attended by:

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